The Mission of Spiritual Science

And of Its Building at Dornach, Switzerland

Dr. Rudolf Steiner

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Foreword

THIS booklet contains a lecture given by me, after a series of objections had been brought forward in a lecture from another quarter against the views summed up under the name “Anthroposophy” or “Spiritual Science.” I came to know of these objections through the circumstance that the lecturer himself had them printed in a newspaper. When the occasion of the observations contained in this booklet is borne in mind, it might seem as if their special publication were unjustified. With regard to this it may be said that even though the objections in question were, to begin with, only the subject of a single lecture, they are the ones with which it is intended from many quarters and in divers repetitions to refute the spiritual science (Anthroposophy) referred to in this booklet. They are to a certain extent typical “refutations.” They are typical, not only because of what is alleged, but because of the *manner* in which an attitude is taken towards that to which objections are raised. This manner is characteristic. It is often the case that people do not fix their attention upon what spiritual science says and direct their attack against this, but they fabricate an idea of what they *think* it says, and then attack this idea. A curious position results. The one attacked may quite agree with his opponent in his judgement of all that is attacked, and yet he is obliged to find that he is condemned, together with the distorted idea formed of him. The following example is particularly characteristic for this form of attack. A building is being erected for the purposes of

Anthroposophy (Spiritual Science). This is to be a “College of Spiritual Science.” In the artistic form of the building it is sought to realise that for which this Spiritual Science can give the stimulus. The building is intended to bring to artistic expression that for which it is the frame, as it were. Certainly, the manner in which this is accomplished may be objected to from one or another artistic point of view. And the author of this pamphlet is far from thinking that what is being attempted in this building will be fully attained. But he is endeavouring to see that every sort of inartistic symbolism or allegorising is kept far removed from it. It is only necessary to open one’s eyes in order to find that, when it is viewed, there is absolutely nothing symbolical or allegorical of the kind often met with where not Spiritual Science such as is to be pursued in this building, but unhealthy mysticism or such like is found. Yet in spite of this, one of the objections raised against this building is “One who enters this building will find all kinds of mysterious symbols which are Incomprehensible to the non-initiated, etc., etc.” In this way what we wish to attain in the building is successfully attacked, but only through the attack being directed against something which does not exist, and which, if it were really so, the one attacked would repudiate just as his opponent does. But by far the most of what is brought against the spiritual science we represent runs on this line. First a caricature of it is made, which sets all scientific thought at defiance, and then this caricature is attacked with the weapons of science. Another caricature is made, which is

attacked from the point of view of religious feeling, whereas in truth no religious confession would have the slightest occasion to think anything but kindly of this spiritual science, if its true form were kept in view instead of a caricature of it.

In such a state of affairs it is almost impossible to do anything more than meet these attacks by stating the actual aims of spiritual science or Anthroposophy, and the lines it takes. I endeavoured to do this in the lecture upon which this pamphlet is based. Above all it is shown that the attacks are inapposite, because they are directed against self-made targets and not against Anthroposophy.

In this pamphlet, therefore, the true form of spiritual science is delineated in contradistinction to the imaginary one.

In the “Afterword,” a little more is said which amplifies the hints given in the lecture. The word “we” often occurs in the lecture; this is because I spoke to a certain extent as the representative of the movement in which Anthroposophy is cultivated.

Rudolf Steiner
April, 1916

The Mission of Spiritual Science and of Its Building at Dornach, Switzerland

IF I try to put forward this evening something about so-called spiritual science, about the way in which it is to be dealt with in the building at Dornach with which you are acquainted, and about that building itself, it is in no wise my intention to propagandise or arouse feeling either for Spiritual Science or for the Building.

I have especially in view the consideration of certain misunderstandings, which are known to exist with reference to the aims of the Anthroposophical Society. I will begin with the way in which a more or less unknown thing is judged when it makes its appearance anywhere. It is very easy to understand that anyone unfamiliar with a subject sees in its name something by means of which he thinks he can understand it. Anthroposophy and the Anthroposophical Society are names which have become more widely known than they formerly were, through the building at Dornach. “Anthroposophy” is by no means a new name. When some years ago there was a question of giving our cause a name, I thought of one which had become dear to me because a Professor of Philosophy, Robert Zimmermann, whose lectures I heard in my youth, called his chief work *Anthroposophy*. This was in the eighties of the nineteenth century. Moreover, the name Anthroposophy takes us still further back into literature. It was already used in the eighteenth century, indeed, still earlier. The name,

therefore, is an old one; we are applying it to something new. For us it does not mean, “Knowledge of human beings.” That would be against the express intention of those who gave the name. Our science itself leads us to, the conviction that within the physical human being there lives a spiritual, inner one — as it were, a second human being.

Whereas that which man can learn about the universe through his senses and through the intellect which relies upon sense-observation may be called “Anthropology,” that which the inner, spiritual human being can know may be called “Anthroposophy.”

Anthroposophy is therefore the knowledge of the spiritual human being, or spirit-man, and that knowledge is not confined to man, but is a knowledge of everything which the spirit-man can perceive in the spiritual world, just as physical man observes physical things in the world. Because this second human being, the inner one, is the spiritual human being, the knowledge which he acquires may be called “Spiritual Science.” And this name is even less new than the name Anthroposophy. That is to say, it is not even unusual, and it would be a complete misunderstanding if anyone were to think that I, as has been said, or anyone closely connected with me, had coined the name “Spiritual Science.” The name is used everywhere where it is thought possible to attain knowledge which is not merely physical science, but

knowledge of something spiritual. Numbers of our contemporaries call history a spiritual science, call sociology, political economy, aesthetics, and the philosophy of religion spiritual sciences. We use the name, only in a somewhat different sense, that is, in the sense that spirit is to us something real and actual, whereas most of those who nowadays speak of history, political economy, etc., as spiritual sciences, resolve the spirit into abstract ideas.

I will now also say something about the development of our Anthroposophical Society, because errors have been circulated on the subject. For instance, it is said that our Anthroposophical Society is only a kind of development out of what is called the “Theosophical Society.” Although it is true that what we aim at within our Anthroposophical Society placed itself for a time within the framework of the general Theosophical Society, yet our Anthroposophical Society must on no account be confused with the Theosophical Society. And in order to prevent this, I must bring forward something apparently personal, about the gradual rise of the Anthroposophical Society.

It was about fifteen years ago that I was invited by a small circle of people to give certain lectures on spiritual science. These lectures were afterwards published under the title, *The Mystics of the Renaissance*. Up till then I had, I may say, endeavoured as a solitary thinker to build up a view of the

world which on the one hand fully reckons with the great, momentous achievements of the physical sciences, and on the other hand desires to rise to insight into spiritual worlds.

I must expressly lay stress on the fact that at the time when I was invited to speak to a small circle in Germany on the subject connected with spiritual science already mentioned, I did not depend in any way upon the works of the writer Blavatsky or of Annie Besant, nor did I take them particularly into consideration. These books, in their way of looking at things, were but little in keeping with my view of the world. I had at that time endeavoured, purely out of what I had discovered for myself, to give some points of view about spiritual worlds. The lectures we're printed; some of them were very soon translated into English, and that by a distinguished member of the Theosophical Society, which at that time was particularly flourishing in England; and from this quarter I was urged to enter the Theosophical Society. At no time had I any idea, if the occasion should have presented itself in the Theosophical Society, of bringing forward anything else but what was built up on the foundation of my own, independent method of research.

That which now forms the substance of our Anthroposophical view of the world, as studied in our circle of members, is not borrowed from the Theosophical Society, but was represented by me as something entirely independent,

and represented within that Society in consequence of an invitation from it, until it was there found heretical and turned out; and what had thus always been an independent part of that Society was further developed and further built up in the now wholly independent Anthroposophical Society.

Thus it is an entirely erroneous conception to confuse in any way that which is living within the Anthroposophical Society with what is represented by Blavatsky and Besant. It is true that Blavatsky has in her books put forward important truths concerning spiritual worlds, but mixed with so much error that only one who has accurately investigated these matters can succeed in separating what is important from what is erroneous. Hence our Anthroposophical movement must claim to be considered wholly independent. This is not put forward from want of modesty, but merely in order to place a fact in its objectively right light.

Then came the time when it became necessary to represent in an artistic, dramatic form that which our spiritual science, our Anthroposophy, gave in its teachings. We began doing this in 1909 at Munich. From that time onward to the year 1913 we tried every year to give artistic expression in dramatic representations at Munich to that which our investigations lead us to acknowledge is living in the world as spiritual forces, as spiritual beings.

These dramatic performances were at first given in an ordinary theatre. But it soon became evident that an ordinary theatre cannot be the right framework for that which, in a certain way, was to enter the spiritual development of humanity as a new thing-. And thus the necessity arose for having a building of our own for such representations, and for the prosecution of our spiritual science generally and the art which belongs to it; a building which, moreover, in its form of architecture is an expression of what it is desired to accomplish. At first it was thought that it would be well to erect such a building in Munich. When this proved impossible, or, at any rate, extremely difficult, the possibility arose of our erecting the building at Dornach near Basle, on a very beautiful hill, where a large piece of land was offered us by a Swiss friend, who had this ground at his disposal, and who has our cause at heart. And thus, through easily comprehensible circumstances, it has come about that the building has been erected just in the north-western corner of Switzerland.

And now, before speaking further about the Dornach building, I should like to deal with the mission of spiritual science itself. It may be quite easy to understand that spiritual science or Anthroposophy, in the sense here intended, is misunderstood. One who has become conversant with this spiritual science finds it entirely comprehensible that many misunderstandings should be brought against it; and one who

knows the course taken by the Spiritual development of mankind, will not be surprised at such misunderstandings. Opinions such as, “It is mere imagination; it is dreaming,” or perhaps worse, are comprehensible. In the same way as this spiritual science have, as a rule, those things been received which have entered the spiritual evolution of mankind for the first time. Moreover, it may very easily appear as if this spiritual science resembled certain older views of the universe which are not exactly popular at the present time. If the objects of spiritual science or Anthroposophy are looked at merely from the outside, it may be thought that they resemble those pursued by the Gnostics in the first Christian centuries. But one who really learns what our spiritual science is will find that it bears no more resemblance to the Gnosis than does the natural science of the present day to the natural science of the eighth- or sixth-century A.D. True, resemblances may be found between all possible things, if only a sufficient number of their distinguishing features be eliminated. It may, for instance, be said, “This spiritual science, this Anthroposophy, desires to know the world in a spiritual way. The Gnostics also desired to know the world in a spiritual way. Consequently spiritual science and the Gnosis are one and the same.”

In a similar manner may Anthroposophy be confused, let us say, with alchemy, with the magic of the Middle Ages. But this is all due to a complete misapprehension, a complete

misunderstanding of the real aims of this spiritual science or Anthroposophy. In order to gain insight into this matter, it is necessary to look first at the modern method of thought in natural science, which for three or four centuries has been developing out of quite a different method of thought. It is necessary to realise what it meant for mankind when three or four centuries ago the revolution took place which may be expressed in the words: up to that time everyone, learned and ignorant alike, believed that the earth stood still in the midst of the universe, and that the sun and stars revolved round the earth. It may be said that in consequence of what Copernicus, Galileo, and others taught at that time, the ground under men's feet was made movable. Now, when the movement of the earth is looked upon as a matter of course, there is no feeling left of the surprising effect produced upon humanity at large by this and everything connected with it.

Now what natural science then sought to do for the interpretation and explanation of the mysteries of nature, spiritual science seeks to do for the spirit and soul at the present time. In its fundamental nature, spiritual science desires to be nothing else than something for the life of soul and spirit similar to what natural science then became for the life of external nature. One who believes, for instance, that our spiritual science has something to do with the ancient Gnosis quite ignores the fact that with the view of the world taken by natural science, something new entered the mental evolution

of mankind, and that as a result of this new element, spiritual science is to be something similarly new for the investigation of spiritual worlds.

Now spiritual science, if it is to do the same for spirit that natural science has dome for nature must investigate quite differently from the latter. It must find ways and means of penetrating into the sphere of the spiritual, a domain which cannot be perceived with outer physical senses, nor apprehended with the intellect which is limited to the brain.

It is still difficult to speak intelligibly about the ways and means found by spiritual science for penetrating into the spiritual sphere, because the spiritual world is generally considered, from the outset, as something unknown, indeed, as something which must necessarily remain unknown. Now spiritual science shows that the perceptive powers which man has in ordinary life, and which he also uses in ordinary science, are by no means able to penetrate into the spiritual world. In this respect spiritual science is in full accord with certain branches of natural science. Only natural science does not know certain faculties in man, which are latent within him, but capable of being developed.

It is again difficult to speak of these faculties at the present time, for the reason that they are, far and wide, confused with all manner of diseased phenomena in man. For instance,

there is much talk nowadays of the possibility of man's acquiring certain abnormal faculties, and the natural scientist thereupon declares that it is true that they may be acquired, but they are only due to the fact that the otherwise normal nervous system and brain have become abnormal and diseased. In every case in which the investigator in natural science is correct in making such a statement, the spiritual investigator at once acknowledges it. But the aim of spiritual science should not be confused with what is often and widely called "clairvoyance," in a superficial way. Neither should spiritual science be confused with that which appears under the name of spiritualism, etc., etc. The essential thing is this, that this spiritual science should be distinguished from everything that is in any way due to diseased human predispositions.

In order to make myself quite intelligible on this point, I must indicate, if only in a few words, the manner in which the spiritual investigator institutes his researches. The method of research in spiritual science is founded on something which has nothing to do with the soul-forces of man in so far as they are bound up with his bodily organism. If, for instance, it is said that spiritual science is founded on what is to be attained through some form. of asceticism, or on something for which the nervous system is prepared and stimulated in a certain way, or that it results from the bringing of spirits into manifestation in an outer, physical way — all such assertions

would be utterly inaccurate. That which the spiritual investigator has to do to gain the faculty of looking into the spiritual world, consists exclusively of processes of the spirit and soul; they have nothing to do with changes in the body, nor with visions arising from a morbid bodily life.

The spiritual investigator will be most careful not to let the body have any influence over that which he spiritually perceives. I mention by the way that if, for instance, a large number of the adherents of spiritual science are vegetarians, this is a matter of taste, which in principle has nothing to do with spiritual methods of research. It has only to do with a certain manner of making life easier — I would even say, with a more comfortable regulation of life, since it is easier to work in a spiritual way if no meat be eaten.

The main point is that spiritual science, with its methods of research, only begins where modern natural science leaves off. Humanity is indebted to the view of the world taken by natural science for what I would call a logic which educates itself by the facts of nature itself.

An important method of training has come in, among those who have studied natural science, with regard to the inner handling of thought. I will now try to make clear by a comparison the relation of spiritually scientific research to that of natural science. The mode of thought used by the

investigator in natural science I would compare with the forms of a statue. The logic developed from the outer facts of nature has something lifeless in it. When we think logically, we have images in our conceptions and ideas. But these images are only inner thought-forms, just as the forms of a statue are forms.

Now the spiritual investigator sets out from this mode of thinking. In my books, *The Way of Initiation*, *Initiation and its Results*, and *The Gates of Knowledge*, directions are to be found as to what must be done with thinking in order that it may become something entirely different from what it is in ordinary life and ordinary science. The spiritual investigator develops his thinking; he makes it undergo a certain, special discipline. I cannot in this short sketch enter into details; these are described in the books I have named. When thinking, when the logic that bears sway in man, is treated in a certain way, the whole inner life of the soul becomes changed. Something happens which changes this soul-life into something else, which I will once more make dear by a comparison.

Imagine that the statue — this, of course, cannot happen, but let us assume that it could — imagine that the statue, which previously stood there with its lifeless form, were suddenly to begin to walk and to become living. This the statue cannot do; but human thinking, inner logical activity,

can. By means of the soul-exercises undertaken and carried out by the spiritual investigator, he puts himself into such a state, that there is within him not only a thought-out logic, but a living logic; logic itself becomes a *living being* within him. Thereby he has grasped something living and bearing sway within him, instead of lifeless conceptions. He becomes permeated by this living, ruling element. And when spiritual research assumes the existence of an etheric body, besides the physical body which is visible to bodily eyes, by this is meant not something merely imagined, but it is meant that man, by bringing logical thinking to life within him, becomes conscious of a second human being within him. This is a matter of experience which may be arrived at. The experience must be made, in order that the science of the spiritual human being may arise, just as the outer experiments of natural science must be made, in order to learn nature's secrets.

Just as thinking is so transformed that it no longer leads merely to images, but becomes inwardly active and alive, so may the will also be developed in a certain way. The methods by which the will is so treated that we learn to know it as something different from what it is in ordinary life, are also to be found described in the above-named books. Through this development of the will, something of quite a different kind results from what comes through the development of thinking. If we desire to do something in ordinary life, if we work, the will, as it were, penetrates into the limbs. We say, "I will"; we

move our hands; but the will only comes to expression in this movement. In its real essence it remains unknown. But by using certain exercises, the will may be released from its connection with the limbs. The will may be experienced in itself alone. Thinking may be made active, so as to become something inwardly alive, a kind of etheric body. The will may be isolated, separated from its connection with the bodily nature, and then we realise that we have within us a second human being in a far higher sense than is the case with thinking. Through the development of the will we become aware that we have a second human being within us, which has a consciousness of its own. If we work at our will in an adequate way, something takes place which I can only make clear by reminding you that in ordinary human life there are two alternating states, waking life and sleep. In waking life man lives, consciously; during sleep, consciousness ceases.

Now at first it is a mere assertion to say that the soul and spirit do not cease to be conscious between the time of falling asleep and awaking. But they are no longer directly in the body, they are outside it. The spiritual investigator succeeds in voluntarily giving his bodily life the same form that it takes involuntarily when he goes to sleep. He orders his senses and his ordinary intellect to be still; he achieves this by developing his will. And it then happens that the same condition is voluntarily brought about that is usually involuntarily present in sleep. Yet, on the other hand, what is now brought about is

the complete opposite of the sleep-condition. Whereas during sleep we become unconscious and know nothing about ourselves and our surroundings, through developing the will in the manner described we consciously leave our bodies; we see the body outside ourselves, just as we usually perceive an external object outside ourselves. Then we notice that in man there lives a real spectator of his thoughts and actions. This is no mere image, no merely pictorial expression, but it is a reality. In our will there lives something which is perpetually observing us inwardly. It is easy to look upon this inner spectator as something intended to be taken pictorially; the spiritual investigator knows it to be a reality, just as the objects of sense are realities. And if we have these two, the living, moving thought-being, the etheric human being, and this inner spectator, then we have brought ourselves into a spiritual world, which is actually experienced, as the physical world is experienced with the senses. A second human being is found in man in this way, as oxygen is found in water by the methods of natural science.

That which is attained by developed thinking, is not visions, but spiritual sight of realities; what is attained by a developed will, is not ordinary soul-experiences, but the discovery of a different consciousness from the ordinary one. There now act one upon the other, the human being who is logic in motion, and the other human being who is a higher consciousness. If we learn to know these two within man, we know that part of

man which exists even when his physical body falls into decay, when he goes through the gate of death. We learn to know the being in man which does not act through the outer body, which is of a soul and spirit nature, which will continue to exist after death, which existed also before birth, or, let us say, before conception. We learn to know the eternal essence of man in this way, through having separated it, as it were, out of the ordinary mortal human being, just as we can separate oxygen out of water by a chemical process.

All that I have now brought before you must of course still be looked upon as fantastic at the present time; in relation to customary ideas, it is as fantastic as the words of Copernicus seemed, when he said, “It is not the sun which revolves round the earth, but the earth revolves round the sun.” Nevertheless, what appears so fantastic is really only something unaccustomed. It is not the case that something invented or dreamed has been related in what has just been set forth, but the point is that the spiritual is actually experienced as a fact by means of inward processes. The spiritual investigator is not speaking in a simple manner of man’s nature when he enumerates, “Man consists of a physical body, etheric body, astral body, etc.,” but he is showing how that which is human nature, when it is contemplated as a whole, becomes split up into certain principles of which it is composed. And if the matter be regarded in accordance with its fundamental essence, nothing magical or mystical in a bad sense is meant

by these principles of man's being. Spiritual science shows that man consists of different gradations, different shades of human nature. And this in a higher sphere is no different from the fact, in a lower one, that light may be so treated as to appear in seven colours. Just as light must be split up into seven colours in order that it may be studied, so must man be divided into his several parts in order that he may be really studied.

It should not be expected that what is spiritual can be brought before bodily eyes, before the senses. It must be experienced inwardly and spiritually. And to one who will not admit that inward experience, a spiritual experience, is in any way a fact, anything said by the spiritual investigator will be but empty skirmishing with words. To one who learns to know spiritual facts, these are realities in a far higher sense than are physical facts. If a plant grows, and develops blossom and fruit, a new plant again develops out of the seed; and when we have learnt to know the germ, we know that it has the full force of the plant within it, and that a new plant arises from the g-germ.

What is of the nature of spirit and soul must be learned from facts belonging to the spirit and soul; then we know that in the living thought, which is apprehended by the consciousness that is liberated out of the will, a life-germ has been discerned, which passes through the gate of death, goes through the

spiritual world after death and afterwards returns again to earth-life. And just as truly as the plant-seed develops a new plant, does that which is the kernel of man's being develop a new earth-life. This new human being can be seen in the present one, for it becomes inwardly alive.

Natural science has methods of calculating certain events which will happen in the future. From the relative positions of the sun and moon it may be calculated when eclipses of these will occur. It is only necessary to know the corresponding factors in order to calculate when a certain conjunction of the stars will take place. In these cases it is necessary to use mathematics, because we are dealing with external space. The life-germ, which is inwardly experienced, also contains in a living way the indication of future earth-lives. Just as future eclipses of the sun and moon are indicated in the present relations of those bodies, so are future earth-lives indicated in that which is now alive within us. In this case we are not dealing with what, according to more ancient views, is called the transmigration of souls, but with something which modern spiritual research discovers from the facts of spiritual life, which are capable of being investigated.

Now certain things must be carefully kept in view, if we wish to understand the real foundations of spiritual research. We arrive at leaving the body with our soul and spirit through treating thought and will in the manner that has been

indicated. We are then outside the body; and just as we usually have outer things before our eyes, so do we have our own physical body before us. But the essential thing is that we can *always* observe this body. And if it is a case of spiritual research in the true sense of the words, as it is here meant, that must never happen which does so in a diseased soul-life. For what is the characteristic feature of an abnormal or diseased soul-life? If some one is put into a hypnotic state or a so-called trance, as certain conditions are called, and speaks out of the subconscious, which is often denominated a kind of clairvoyance, the essential thing in the process is that the ordinary consciousness is not present whilst the changed consciousness is active. The former has been transformed into a dulled, abnormal consciousness. It will never be possible to say, when observing an abnormal and unhealthy condition of soul, “The healthy condition of soul is present at the same time as this,” for in that case the person would certainly not be unhealthy or abnormal.

In real spiritual research the fact is that man arrives at a changed consciousness, but that as a normal human being he is all the time standing by. The condition in which the spiritual investigator is, is not developed *from out of* ordinary normal soul-life, but by *the side of it*, if the condition is the right one. In the case of a genuine spiritual investigator, he lives, during his researches, outside his body; but his body continues to work on undisturbed together with all his normal soul-

functions and his ordinary intellect, which remains completely normal. The man, if he is a true spiritual investigator, remains a normal human being, in spite of the fact that he has left his body, together with what he has developed within himself; and one who cannot himself investigate spiritually, really need not see that the other is living in a different world. The non-hypnotised person is not present beside the hypnotised one; the person with a normal soul-life is not present beside the one who is developing an abnormal soul-life. But the characteristic feature of spiritual research is that whilst it is being pursued, the person's normal condition is completely maintained. Just on this account the spiritual investigator is in a position accurately to distinguish true spiritual research from that which appears in any diseased conditions of soul.

Another mistake arises when it is thought that spiritual research has anything in common with ordinary spiritualism. By this it is not meant that all manner of facts may not be discovered through spiritualism, but these belong to natural science, not to spiritual science, for that which is discovered through spiritualism is presented to the outer senses, whether by means of materialisations, or knockings and the like. That which can be presented to the senses belongs to natural science. That which offers itself as an object to the spiritual investigator is of a soul and spirit nature, and cannot be presented externally, for instance, in space; it must be experienced inwardly.

Through the inner experience which has been described there is formed a comprehensive spiritual science, which not only throws light on the being of man and the passage through repeated earth-lives, but is also enlightening about the spiritual worlds and spiritual beings which lie behind nature. Spiritual research is able to enter the world through which man passes after death. Only it must not be thought that what appear in ordinary life in a certain sense as abnormal faculties have any special value in spiritual science. There is much talk nowadays of the possibility of telepathy. We will not now enter into all the pros and cons of this matter. People must grow accustomed to many things in the course of time. Just at the present time serious investigators are wrestling with the problem of the significance of the divining-rod, which is now so widely used, and about which one of the most matter-of-fact investigators is just now making important experiments, in order to ascertain what influence a person is under who is successful with the divining-rod. But all this belongs to the department of finer natural science. In the same way does the fact belong to this department that thoughts entertained by one person are able to influence another at a distance. True spiritual research cannot use such forces for gaining knowledge about the world of soul and spirit. It is a complete misunderstanding of spiritual science to think that it looks upon the teaching about telepathy as anything else but a part of a refined physiology, a refined form of natural science.

The way in which spiritual science investigates must not be confused with that which nowadays appears as spiritualism. When spiritual science remembers the human souls which are passing through a purely spiritual life in a spiritual world between death and re-birth, spiritual science knows that those souls are in the spiritual world in a soul-state pure and simple. Now it is possible for the spirit and soul that is in a human body to turn to the dead in such a way that a real connection is made with them. But this turning to the dead must itself be of a purely spiritual and soul character. Spiritual science shows this. And the direction of our own soul-life to our beloved dead may acquire deep significance, even whilst we ourselves are still in the physical world. It cannot be at variance with any religious belief if, through the view of the world taken by spiritual science, remembrance of the dead and active communion with them is cultivated in this way, if spiritual science stimulates this living together with the dead. In this connection it must always be borne in mind that the dead person can only be aware of what we are thinking and feeling for him in our souls if he *desires* such a connection with us. This also is shown by spiritual science. The exercise of any sort of power over the dead is entirely remote from the intentions of the spiritual investigator. He knows quite well that the dead are living in a sphere in which the relations of the will are different from those in the physical world; and if he were to wish to penetrate into the spiritual world, taking with him what he is able to develop here within the physical world, it

would seem to him as though — to use a comparison — a company of people were sitting here and a lion suddenly appeared through the floor and committed ravages. So would harm result if an earthly human being were to force his way into the life of the dead in an unbefitting manner. Therefore there can be no question in spiritual science of summoning the dead, in the way in which this is attempted in spiritualism, just because the relations of the living to the dead are illuminated in a wonderful way by that which spiritual science arouses within our souls. And since amongst the numerous errors which have been urged against our spiritual science, one is that it has a connection with spiritualism with regard to the dead, it is very necessary to emphasise this misunderstanding sharply. Nothing less than the exact *contrary of the truth* is asserted with regard to spiritual science in this matter.

As already said, I do not wish to proselytise or arouse feeling for our cause, but only to mention misunderstandings which I know to be prevalent, and to indicate in the clearest way possible the relation of spiritual science to these matters.

Now the question is also asked — and it is even called an urgent one — what is the position of spiritual science or Anthroposophy towards the religious life of man? Its very nature, however, prevents it from interposing directly in any religious confession, in the sphere of any religious life. In this

connection I can perhaps make myself clear in the following way. Let us assume that we have to do with natural science. Because we gain a knowledge of nature, we shall not imagine that we are able to create something in nature itself. Knowledge of nature does not create anything in nature. Nor, because we gain knowledge of spiritual conditions, shall we imagine that we are able to create something in spiritual facts. We observe spiritual conditions. Spiritual science endeavours to penetrate behind the mysteries of the spiritual conditions in the world. Religions are facts in the historical life of humanity. Spiritual science can of course go so far as to consider the spiritual phenomena which have appeared as religions in the course of the world's evolution. But spiritual science can never desire to create a religion, any more than natural science surrenders itself to the illusion of being able to create something in nature. Hence the most various religious confessions will be able to live together in the profoundest peace, and in complete harmony within the circle of the view of the world taken by spiritual science, and will be able to strive together after knowledge of the spiritual — so to strive that the religious convictions of the individual will not thereby be in any way injured. Neither need intensity in the exercise of a religious belief be in any way lessened by what is found in spiritual science. Rather must it be said that natural science, as it has appeared in modern times, has very often led people away from a religious conception of life, from the exercise of true, inner religion. It is an experience which we have in

spiritual science that people who have been alienated from all religious life by the half-truths of natural science can be brought back again to that life through spiritual science. No one need be in any way estranged from his religious life through spiritual science. For this reason it cannot be said that spiritual science, as such, is a religious belief. It desires neither to create a religious belief, nor to change a man in any way with regard to the religious belief which he holds. Nevertheless it seems as though people were talking about the religion of the Anthroposophists! In reality such a thing cannot be said, for all religious beliefs are represented within the Anthroposophical Society; and no one is prevented by it from practically exercising his religious belief in the fullest, most comprehensive and most intense way. It is only that spiritual science desires to include the whole world in its survey; it desires to survey historical life, together with the highest spirituality which has entered historical life. That for this reason it also takes a survey of religions is absolutely no contradiction of what I have just said. And thus it comes to pass that the view of the world taken by spiritual science must in a certain respect deepen a man, even with regard to the objects of religious life.

But when, for instance, it happens that spiritual science is accused of not speaking of a personal God, when it is said that I prefer to speak of the Divinity, not of God, when it is asserted that what is called “the divine” in spiritual science is

of a similar nature to that which is so designated in the pantheism of the Monists or Naturalists, this is all the opposite of the truth. Through the very circumstance that in spiritual science we are led to real spiritual beings, and to the real being that man is after death, just because we are led to concrete, real spiritual beings, we arrive at being able completely to understand how unreasonable it is to become a pantheist, how repugnant to common sense to deny personality in God. One arrives, on the contrary, at seeing that one may speak not only of the personality, but even of a super-personality of God. The most thorough refutation of pantheism may be found through spiritual science.

Can it be a subject of reproach that the spiritual investigator only speaks with deep reverence when, out of the feelings which his knowledge arouses in him, he points the way with awe to the divine? How often it is said in the circle of our friends, “In Him we live, and move, and have our being.” And one who wishes to comprehend God with one idea, does not know that all possible ideas cannot comprehend God, because all ideas are *in* God. But the recognition of God as a being who has personality in a much higher sense even than man, in a sense which even through spiritual science cannot be fully perceived, becomes quite, I would say, natural to people, specially through Anthroposophy. Religious conceptions are not made misty, in the pantheistic sense, through spiritual science, but, in accordance with their nature,

become deepened. If we say that God is revealed in our own hearts and souls, this is surely the conviction of many religious people; and it is again and again said in spiritual science that there can be no question in this of wishing to deify man.

I have often used the simile that a drop taken out of the sea is water — do I therefore say that the drop is the sea? If I say that something divine speaks in the individual human soul, a drop out of the ocean of the infinite divine, do I therefore say anything which deifies the individual human soul? Do I say anything which unites nature with in a pantheistic way? Far from it. And finally, if from certain deeply-seated feelings which are aroused by spiritual science itself, the name “GOD” is, in reverential awe, not named but paraphrased, should this be a subject of blame from the religious point of view? I ask, is not one of the Ten Commandments, “Thou shalt not take the name of the Lord thy God in vain?” May not spiritual science stimulate to a faithful fulfilment of this command, if the name of God is not perpetually on the lips of its followers?

And the name and being of Christ? It is just of spiritual science that it may be said that it makes every effort to understand the being of Christ, and that in doing so it is never at variance with that which is developed, from true foundations, by any religious denomination. Only, in this very domain, we meet with something most singular. Some one

comes and says he has a certain conception or feeling about Christ, about Jesus, and we say to him, “Certainly, we recognise these feelings as wholly justified; only spiritual science leads to thinking many other things about Christ as well. It does not deny what you say, it accepts it. Only it must add much more to it.”

Just because spiritual science widens the spiritual sight, the eye of the soul, to extend over the spiritual world, is it necessary not only to recognise in the being to whom the Christian looks up as his Christ, the one who walked this earth, but to bring this being into connection with the entire cosmos. And then, again, much else is the consequence of so doing. But nothing which results from it takes anything away from the knowledge of Christ, only something is added to what the religious man, the really Christian religious man, has to say about the Christ. And when some one attacks the conception of Christ Jesus held by spiritual science, it always seems to the spiritual investigator as though some one comes and says, “I have this or that to say about the Christ; do you believe it?” “Yes!” we say. “Yes, but you not only believe that, but more besides!” This he will not allow. He is not satisfied with our admitting what he advocates, but he forbids us to declare something still greater and grander about the Christ than he himself declares.

For can it really be a heresy when spiritual science, out of

its fundamental basis, out of the observation of that which, as spirit, holds sway through the whole progress of the earth with regard to human and other evolution, arrives at saying, “The whole existence of the earth would have no meaning in the universe if the Mystery of Golgotha had not taken place within the earthly sphere?” The spiritual investigator must say, “If any inhabitants of distant worlds could look down upon the earth and see what it is, they would see no meaning in the whole evolution of the earth unless Christ had lived, died, and risen again upon it.” The event of Golgotha gives meaning and purpose to earth-life for the whole world. If you were to study the results of spiritual research, you would see that reverence for Christ and devotion to Him cannot be diminished by such research, but on the contrary can only be enhanced.

Time presses, and I cannot enter into many other misunderstandings which have been spread abroad concerning certain thoughts about the Bible which are said to be prevalent in circles of Anthroposophists — as they are called, although the word would be better avoided, and only “Anthroposophy” used. The point in this case is that a person may be a very good spiritual investigator without in any way being able to accept what has, for definite reasons, been said for those members of our society who wish to know something about the Gospels or the Bible generally. But if what is said be read with the context, it will be found that, for

instance, I never uttered such nonsense as that repeated earth-lives could be proved from the Bible by means of the passage in which Nathanael is spoken of. It has been asserted that I thought that when the Christ says, “When thou wast under the fig-tree, I saw thee,” he is referring to an earlier incarnation, in which he saw Nathanael sitting under the fig-tree. I can do but one thing when these misunderstandings fly about the world to-day, I can do but one thing — wonder how such things have been able to arise at all out of what was really said. They are just proofs of the manner in which what is really said becomes altered in the most diverse ways when it is repeated from one to another, and how the contrary — for in this case it is the contrary that came out — of what I had said was attributed to me.

I will not now discuss other misunderstandings, which could easily be refuted. I will only mention one thing, which may very easily be said, “What do you think of the fact that nothing about repeated earth-lives is found in the Bible?” It might be that some one would say that he could not believe in these repeated earth-lives, for the simple reason that, according to his convictions, there is a contradiction between the acceptation of these repeated earth-lives, which, certainly, minds such as Lessing’s, for instance, admitted as true, and what is in the Bible.

Now repeated earth-lives will be accepted as a scientific, a

spiritually-scientific fact, and people will learn to think in the following way about the relation to the Bible of such a fact of spiritual science, which had sooner or later to be discovered. Would it be thought possible for anyone to say he did not believe in the existence of America because the Bible does not mention such a place? Or would it be thought any injury to the Bible to say, “I think the existence of America is quite in harmony with my reverence for the Bible, in spite of America’s not being mentioned within its pages”? Is there anything in the Bible about the truth of the Copernican view of the universe? There have been people who for this reason have looked upon the Copernican view of the world as something false and forbidden. Nowadays there is no one really versed in the culture of his time who could say that he found a contradiction between the teaching of Copernicus and the Bible — notwithstanding that the teaching of Copernicus is not in the Bible.

In the same way it may be said of the spiritually-scientific fact of repeated earth-lives that there is no injury done to the cardinal truths of the Bible, merely because nothing can be found therein about reincarnation, and because, indeed, much of its contents may be so interpreted as to seem to contradict this knowledge. These points must only be looked at from the right point of view. If they are so looked at, it may very well be remembered how such things change in the course of time. If some one says he will not admit the truth of repeated earth-

lives for the reason that it contradicts the Bible, I am always reminded that there was a time when Galileo was treated in a very peculiar, well-known way, because he had something to say which apparently, but only apparently, contradicted the Bible. Or we may remember how Giordano Bruno was treated, because he too had something to say about which it was asserted that it could not be demonstrated out of the Bible.

I must, moreover, remember a priest who became the rector of a university some years ago, from the theological faculty, and who in his rectorial address, the subject of which was Galileo, spoke as a Catholic priest somewhat as follows. He said that times change and with them the way in which people accept recognised facts. Galileo was in his time treated as we all know; but now every true Christian sees that through the discovery of the grandeur of the cosmic system, as it became known through Galileo, the glory and majesty of God and devotion to Him can only be increased, not diminished. This was like a priest, it was like a Christian, indeed, it was perhaps said for the first time in a really Christian way. And the fine recognition of Galileo was Christian, which was gained for him from the whole address of this priest.

On the whole I would say, speaking from the convictions of spiritual science, that the spiritual scientist must, through his

teachings, so think of what Christianity is, and of what Christ is to the world, as to say, “How fainthearted are those who think that in consequence of some discovery in the physical or spiritual domain the greatness which breathes towards us from the revelation of Christ can be diminished.” To the spiritual investigator he seems faint-hearted who thinks that through some fact, even such a weighty one as repeated earth-lives, some fact which is discovered in the physical or spiritual sphere, the splendour of the Christ-event and the influence of Christ can be lessened to the Christian; one who believes this might also believe that the sun loses power because it does not shine only for Europe, but for America too.

Whatever further physical or spiritual facts may be discovered, in any far-distant future, the great truths of Christianity will outshine them all. This is discerned by one who approaches the Christ-impulse and the entire Christian conception of the world with the attitude of spiritual research. Such a one has no fear. He is not so faint-hearted as to say that the splendour of Christianity can be diminished by any investigation. He knows that one who believes that Christianity can be imperilled by any physical or spiritual research, does not think much of Christianity.

It is really a question whether perhaps the numerous misunderstandings which exist with regard to that for which

the Dornach building is an outward sign, an outer home, can be overcome. About the Dornach building itself I will only say to-day that it is intended to be nothing else but an artistic putting into form of that which is aroused in our perceptions and feelings when we have received into our souls the living essence of spiritual science or Anthroposophy. Therefore it should not be thought that the ideas of spiritual science are pictured by means of symbols or allegories in the forms of the building. Of that there is no question at all.

If you visit this building you will find that it has the peculiarity of having nothing at all mysterious in it, not a single symbol, nothing allegorical or the like. This has, from the very nature of the building, been kept entirely remote from it.

It may perhaps be said, “But it is necessary to know the thoughts belonging to spiritual science in order to understand what one sees!” This is true, but it is what the art of the Dornach building has in common with every other art. Take the Sistine Madonna, the wonderful picture of the Mother with the Child Jesus. I think that if a person who had never heard anything about Christianity were to stand before the Sistine Madonna, it would be necessary to explain to him what it is, for he too would not be able to understand the subject out of his own feelings. Thus it is a matter of course that it is necessary to live quite in the current of spiritual science in order to understand its art, just as it is necessary to be in the

midst of Christianity in order to understand the Sistine Madonna.

The attempt is not made, in the Dornach building, to express the ideas of spiritual science symbolically, but there underlies it this fact of our view of the world, namely, that spiritual science is something — and this follows from what I have said here to-day — which takes hold of man's inner being in such a living, powerful way, that faculties otherwise dormant in him — artistic faculties as well as others — are awakened. And as spiritual science is something new — not a new name for something old, but something really new — just as present-day natural science is new as compared with the natural science of the Middle Ages, its art too must be something new and different from existing works of art. Gothic art came forward as new, compared with the antique; anyone who is of opinion that only antique art is of value may despise the Gothic; in the same way may a new style be abused, which arises out of a new way of feeling.

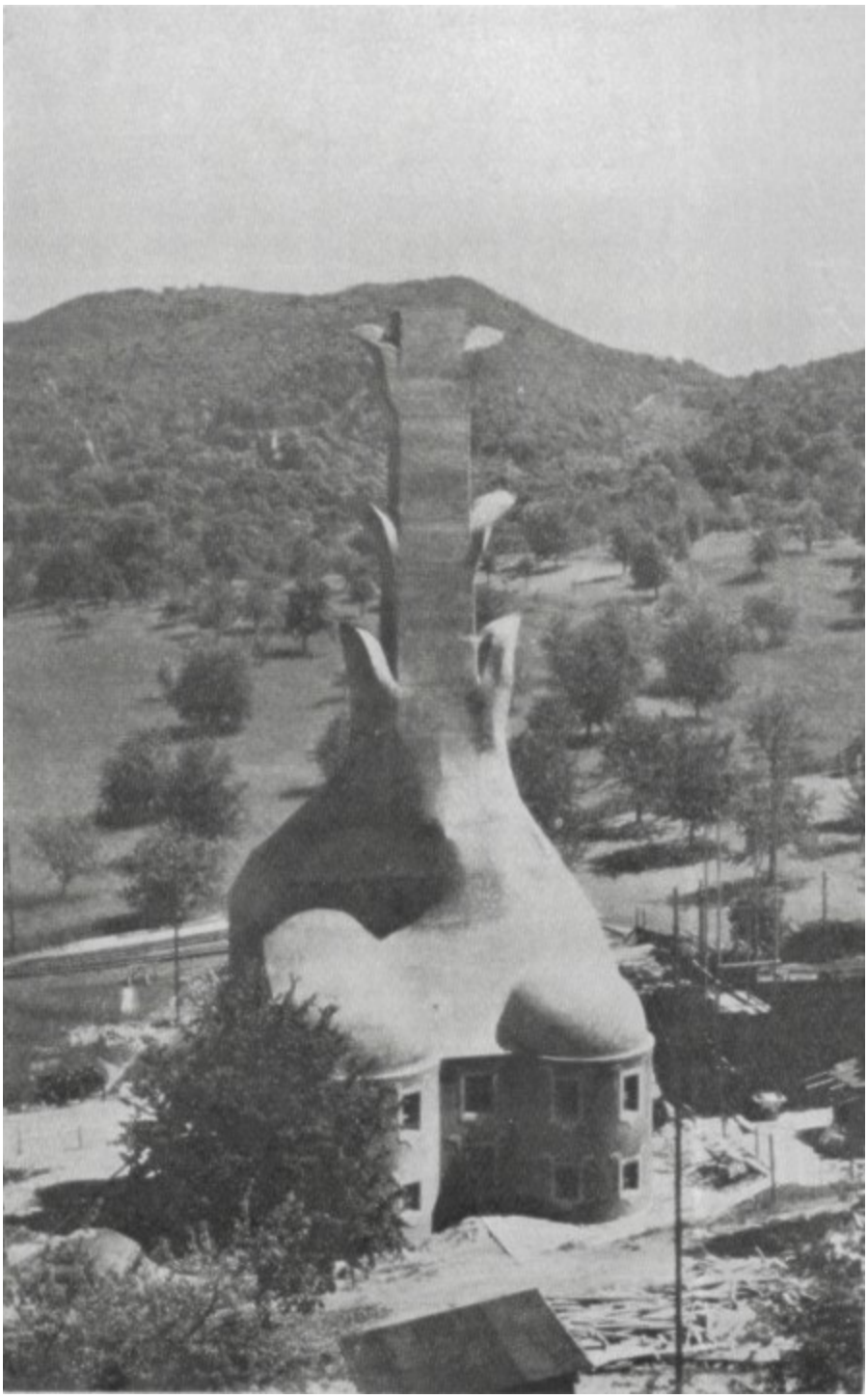
An accessory building is found especially bad. Near the building with two domes stands a heating-house. The attempt has been made to construct a useful building artistically out of the most modern of materials, concrete. The concrete was taken into account. And on the other hand everything that is in the building was taken into account. If anyone explains the form emblematically, if he sees all kinds of symbols in it, he is

just a dreamer, a visionary, not one who sees what is there. Just as a nutshell is shaped so as to fit the nut-kernel, so does the artist try, in what he constructs, to form a shell for what is within it, a shell as it were in conformity with nature, so that the outer form is the appropriate covering of what it contains. That is what is attempted. And one who criticises this building and does not think it beautiful can be understood, for one must first grow used to these things. But he might perhaps try to imagine another chimney, as chimneys are now built, beside our heating-house, a correct, red chimney with its ordinary surroundings, and he might then compare the two.

It is true we very well know that what is attempted in the building at Dornach is but a beginning, and an imperfect beginning, but it is intended as the beginning of something which is arising out of a new view of the world, as a new style of architecture. There are also people who said, “Look, you have made seven columns, seven on each side of the principal hall. You are a very superstitious society; you believe in the mystical number seven.”

Well, one who sees seven colours in the rainbow might also be thought superstitious. In that case it is really nature, which causes the fact, which should be thought superstitious. But anyone who talks about these seven columns should not at first consider the number, but consider what has been newly attempted in the matter. Elsewhere, similar columns are

placed near each other. The capitals of our columns are designed to be in continuous development; the second column is different from the first, the third again different; one capital arises out of another. This results in an organism, which has inner laws in the same way as have the seven tones, from the tonic to the leading note.



Caption: The Heating House

It will thus be found that nowhere have ideas, symbolism or the mysterious been elaborated, but the endeavour has

everywhere been made to develop something artistic in forms, colours and so forth. We have striven to make the whole building the right framework for what is to be carried on within it. Buildings have walls. In walls as they have hitherto been built, people are accustomed to see something so framed as to shut off space. Our walls are so covered over with forms from inside that there is no feeling of space being shut off by the form, but one has the feeling that the wall is pervious and that one is looking out into the infinite. The walls are so constructed in their forms that they seem to efface themselves, and we remain in connection with nature and the whole world.

In this short account I have not wished to convince anyone. I wished to do only what I laid stress on at the beginning; I wish to interest, not to convince. But one thing I would fain emphasise once more — the way in which people become conversant with a particular view of the world depends on their habits of thought. And one who is acquainted with the course taken by the spiritual evolution of mankind knows that truth has always had to be developed through obstacles. Only consider how Giordano Bruno had to come forth before humanity, a humanity which had always believed that the blue vault of heaven was the limit of space. Giordano Bruno had to tell people, “There is nothing at all where you see the blue vault of the sky; you put something there yourselves when you look at it. Space stretches out into infinity, and infinite

worlds are in the infinite space." What Giordano Bruno then did for physical observation, spiritual science has to do for soul and spirit, and for what is temporal. In regard to soul and spirit there is also a kind of firmament, on one side birth, or let us say conception, on the other side, death. But that firmament is actually just as little a reality as the blue firmament above; merely because people can only see as far as birth or conception and as far as death with ordinary human faculties of perception, they think there is a boundary there, as people used to think the firmament was a boundary. But just as the blue firmament is no boundary, but infinite worlds exist in infinite space, so must we, with enlarged faculties, look out beyond the firmament of birth and death into an infinity of time, and behold in it the development of the eternal soul throughout successive earth-lives. In the spiritual sphere things are not different from what they are in the sphere of natural science. Therefore it may be asked: How is it then that so many misunderstandings arise from so many quarters about spiritual science? In this case I must say, if I may treat the matter more or less personally, that I think the reasons why spiritual science meets with so much hostility and misunderstanding are partly objective and partly subjective.

Amongst the objective reasons I would place this one first and foremost: Spiritual science is something upon which it is necessary to concentrate one's thoughts seriously. Long and

earnest work is needful in order to understand it, work which is inseparable from many experiences and even from many disappointments. But this is in reality the case with every subject of knowledge. The paths of Anthroposophy cannot be found without such work. It seems to be the custom to say that for the understanding of a watch it is necessary to learn how the wheels work together. This demands some trouble. But it does not seem to be equally customary to make a similar admission with regard to the universe at large. In this case difficult, apparently complicated views are not allowed to have any value, and yet they are only difficult because the subject in hand is so. Instead of studying spiritual science themselves, people find fault with it because, judged from their own point of view, it is difficult.

Then there are subjective reasons. And these are to be found in what I have already said. It is difficult for people in general to reconcile ideas which they have once formed with ideas to which they are unaccustomed. Such unaccustomed ideas need not even contradict those already entertained, but need only add something to what has already been thought.

It has always been thus with truth. What is contradicted are people’s habits of thought. And from this point of view, if the subjective reasons for misunderstandings about spiritual science are sought, we must say that the reasons are to be found on the same ground from which the teaching of

Copernicus was rejected by the whole world, when it first appeared. It was just something new. But truth has to make its own way in the world, and does so in the end. This may well be felt by one who has at heart spiritual science, and all that to which it stimulates.

He relies on the experience that truth always works its way through the smallest crevices in the rocks of prejudices which have been set up. Perhaps spiritual science may still be hated now. But one who hates it will, at the most, only be able to make others hate it with him, people who are attached to him and swear by what he says. But never yet has a truth been effaced through having been hated. Truth may at any time be misunderstood and misinterpreted, but there will always be found those who know and rightly understand, in the face of those who misconstrue and misjudge. And even if that which spiritual science has to say in our time is not now recognised as true, if it is misunderstood and unappreciated, the time will come for this science also. Truth may be suppressed, but not destroyed. It must always be born again, however often it may be suppressed.

For truth is intimately, deeply and vitally bound up with the human soul, in such a way that one may be convinced that the human soul and truth belong to one another like sisters. And even if there are times and places in which dissension comes about between them, and some misunderstanding

arises, recognition, and mutual love must always reappear between the soul and truth. For they are sisters, who have a common origin, and must always be lovingly mindful of their common origin — their origin in the spirituality which rules throughout the universe, and the discovery of which is the very task which Anthroposophy sets itself.

Afterword

BY means of the details given in this booklet, it was to be shown how antbroposophical spiritual science receives its form at the present time as knowledge of the spiritual world, by going along lines which can hold their own by the side of the authorised lines of a scientific way of looking at things. In order to penetrate into the spiritual world in just as trustworthy a manner as natural science does into the world of matter, spiritual science must take paths which are different from those of natural science. In order to satisfy in a spiritual sphere the same demands which natural science satisfies in its sphere, it must work with faculties of perception and knowledge which are adapted to the spiritual, just as those of natural science are adapted to nature. A spiritual science with aims such as these cannot in any way be confused with more ancient tendencies of thought such as the Gnosis, etc. We can observe how in the course of modern times the effort to arrive at it appears quite clearly. Therefore it does not come forth as something which is voluntarily fabricated at the present time, but as the fulfilment of hopes which can be observed in the mental development of the West. Many things might be adduced to prove this; but we will only give two examples here, which show that “Anthroposophy” is something that has been thought about for a long time. *Troxler*, a thinker of the first half of the nineteenth century who is much under-estimated, published his *Vorlesungen über Philosophie* in 1835. In this work there is the sentence,

“Although it is highly gratifying that the latest philosophy … winds upwards in every *Anthroposophy*, i.e., it must be revealed in poetry as well as in history, we must not overlook the fact that this idea cannot be the fruit of speculation, and the true personality or individuality of man may not be confused either with what it sets up as subjective spirit or final ego, or with what it contrasts with this as absolute spirit or absolute personality.” What Troxler brings forward regarding his idea of Anthroposophy is confined to statements which clearly show how close he is to the acceptance of principles of human nature beyond the physical body. He says, “In earlier times philosophers differentiated a delicate, sublime soul-body from the grosser body. This they considered to be a sort of vehicle of the spirit, and it was an image of the body. They called it the *pattern*, and looked upon it as the inner, higher man.” The connection in which these words are found in Troxler’s work, and the whole of his conception of the world, testify that we may see in his case aspirations which are fulfilled in the spiritual science indicated in this booklet. Only, as Troxler is not in the position to recognise that Anthroposophy is only possible through the development of soul-capacities in the direction indicated in this booklet, his own views relapse to points of view which, as compared with those attained by J. G. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel are not an advance, but retrogression. (See my book *Die Rätsel der Philosophie*.) In the work of J. H. Fichte, the son of the great philosopher, viz., in his *Anthropologie*, second edition 1860,

page 608, we find the following sentences, “Anthropology ends in the result which is confirmed from various quarters, that the true nature of man’s being and the real source of his consciousness belong to a super-sensible world. But sense-consciousness and the phenomenal world which appears before his eyes, together with the whole of the life of the senses, have no other importance than merely to be the place where that super-sensible life of the spirit is realised, by his bringing the spiritual contents of ideas into the sense-world *through his own free, conscious act*. … The final result of this fundamental comprehension of human nature raises ‘Anthropology’ to ‘*Anthroposophy*.’“ In connection with the explanation of these sentences J. H. Fichte says (p. 609), “Thus, finally, Anthroposophy itself is only able to find its final conclusion in *Theosophy*.” The reasons why J. H. Fichte with his own view of the world did not arrive at Anthroposophy, but fell behind J. G. Fichte, Schelling and Hegel, are the same as in Troxler’s case. For the present we will only give these two examples out of a multitude of facts contained in the history of the spiritual development of mankind, which could be adduced to prove that the anthroposophical spiritual science characterised in this booklet responds to a scientific tendency which has existed for a long time.

In a lecture which I gave in 1902 before the Giordano Bruno Union, I referred to these statements by J. H. Fichte (which seemed to me to be the expression of a modern intellectual

movement, not merely of an individual opinion); that was the time when a beginning was made with what now appears as the anthroposophical way of looking at things. From this it may be seen that we had in view the extension of the modern tendency of thought to the genuine observation of spiritual reality. We did not try to bring forth certain views out of the publications then called “theosophical” (and still so named at the present time), but we strove to continue the aspirations given birth to by modern philosophers, aspirations which, however, in their case remained in abstractions, and thus did not gain entrance to the true spiritual world. At the same time, this continuation seemed to me to be an extension of the view which Gœthe, placing it at the foundation of his view of nature, which he described as being “in accordance with the spirit,” did not actually express, but *felt*. One who has followed my writings and lectures may gather all this from them; and I would not specially mention this matter if the misrepresentation of the truth were not brought up again and again, when it is said that I have changed from all that I wrote and said formerly and have turned to the views represented in the works of Blavatsky and Besant. One who carefully studies, for example, my *Theosophy*, will find that everything contained in it is developed in accordance with and as a continuation of the above-described direction of modern thought; he will find that the matters dealt with are presented in accordance with certain presuppositions contained in Gœthe’s conception of the world, and that only in certain

places is it mentioned that ideas which I had arrived at (etheric body, sensation body, etc.), are also to be found in literature which is called theosophical. I know that by these explanations I shall not be able to do away with certain attacks made against me again and again, for in many cases these attacks are not made in order to arrive at the actual facts of the matter, but for something entirely different. But what can be done in the face of ever-recurring inexactitudes? Nothing can be done but to reiterate the truth!

The searcher who works on the basis of the kind of knowledge indicated in this booklet sees that the method of his investigations is in complete accord with the endeavours of present-day natural science. But he knows that these endeavours of natural science must everywhere come to a stand-still or run into blind alleys if they do not meet what spiritual science can bring to light from opposite starting-points. A true view of the matter would look upon both directions of work as being like the boring of a tunnel, which commences from opposite directions, but, when the work is properly arranged, the two parties meet. The *facts* of contemporary work fully confirm this view. It is only misled opinions-regarding these facts which deny this and presume that spiritual science and natural science contradict each other. This contradiction, however, does not really exist. We have a brilliant example of the importance of the meeting of natural science and spiritual science in a book which has just

been published, in, my opinion an epoch-making book. *Vom Schaltwerk der Gedanken: Neue Einsichten und Betrachtungen über die Seele*, by *Karl Ludwig Schleich.* If you read the important chapter on “Hysteria — a metaphysical problem,” you will see how a practical physician, who is at the same time a penetrating thinker, confronts facts which can only be fully elucidated by spiritual science, facts which compel him to say: “In the production of tissue through the impulse of hysteria we have the metaphysical problem of incarnation,” in “mediumistic vision, a kind of clairvoyance of possibilities of disease.” But a person would be under one of the very worst of illusions if he seriously thought that without the results of spiritual science he could explain all the actual experiences of man by the facts discovered by natural science. The scientist who refuses to consider spiritual science is like a man who has a piece of magnetic iron in his hand, but has no notion of magnetism and only uses the iron for an instrument in which magnetism plays no part. What would have come out of it if he had put the magnetism and not the material iron to some use? If you also read in Schleich’s book the chapter on “The myth of the change of matter in the brain,” you will see for yourself how, by constraint of thought, the scientific physician comes to a formal description of what spiritual science — from a comprehensive presentation of spirit-life — appropriately describes as the etheric body of man. It is interesting to notice how this particular chapter in Schleich’s book shows that at

the present time natural science and spiritual science often talk in vain, because the co-operation of natural scientists and spiritual scientists in intellectual affairs is so difficult, on account of the dissipation of our intellectual life. Here we come to the painful thought: How different these things would be if scientists were really to become acquainted with spiritual science, instead of passing it by and leaving it to the foolish misrepresentations of those who act in accordance with the axiom: “Do not examine, but keep your irrelevant, prejudiced verdict!” At the close of the above-mentioned chapter Schleich says — and the case is important, because there is no question of ill-will, it is the statement of an upright, true investigator — “If Gœthe, that seer and prophet, observed so many connections in nature and demonstrated that the skull with all its parts is nothing but an expanded cervical vertebra, because all the constituent parts of the latter can be traced in the bony covering of the brain, it would not surprise me if the thought I have just expressed, namely, of the heaping up of the brain out of the elements of the spinal marrow, did not also slip into the labyrinth of his thought. I should not be surprised if some day a slip of paper by Gœthe on this subject was found.” Such is our intellectual co-operation at the present time! In 1916 an honest searcher expects that some time a scrap of paper of Gœthe’s will be found. But this was found by me as long ago as 1891. In the *Gœian Annual* for 1892, page 175, in the article *Gœthe as Anatomist*, written by Professor K. v. Bardeleben, you will read, “The fact that

Gœthe occupied himself not only with Osteology, but also with the ligaments, the muscles, as well as the brain, is shown by various notes, most of them on loose leaves. In the *Venetian Diary* for 1790 R. Steiner found the following sentence, which may be closely connected with Gœthe's thought on the vertebral nature of the skull-bones: 'The brain itself is only a large principal ganglion. The organisation of the brain is repeated in each ganglion, so that each ganglion is to be looked upon as a small subordinate brain.'" On the basis of this and similar things which I found, I was able to write in 1897 in my book, *Gœthe's Weltanschauung*, out of purely scientific thought, "Each nerve-centre in the ganglia was to him (Gœthe) a brain at a lower stage." And this, in addition to many other things in connection with it, I have often mentioned since. This is only intended to be a small example of the manner in which investigators talk in vain in our pursuit of modern science. I shall certainly be the last to reproach Schleich for not knowing *Gœthe's Annual* for 1892 and my book of 1897; the uncertainty in our pursuit of science comes not from people but from the conditions.

In this booklet it has been pointed out how unfounded is all antagonism to spiritual science proceeding from religious points of view. We mentioned the excellent rectorial address given in 1894 by a catholic priest who was professor to the theological faculty at Vienna University. We are referring to Doctor Laurenz Müllner and his discourse on *Galileo's*

Importance to Philosophy. In this address Doctor Milliner, who has remained a faithful son of his Church, says the following: “Thus a new conception of the world appeared (he is referring to the Galileo-Copernican view), which in many points was apparently at variance with opinions regarding which it was asserted, with very questionable right, that they proceeded from the doctrines of Christianity. It was much more a question of the contrast of the widened world-consciousness of the *modern* age to the more limited one of the *antique*, a contrast to the Greek, but not to the rightly understood Christian conception of the world, which could only see fresh marvels of divine power and wisdom in the newly discovered starry worlds, whereby the miracle of divine love accomplished on earth could only acquire greater importance.” In a similar manner with respect to the relation of spiritual science to religion it may be said that this spiritual science is often apparently at variance with opinions which are often represented as belonging to Christianity, but which with very questionable right assert their origin in the doctrines of Christianity. It is more a question of the contrast of the world-consciousness of our modern age which has extended into spiritual reality, to the narrowly limited natural-scientific consciousness of the last few centuries, but not to the rightly understood Christian conception of the world, which should only see in the spirit-worlds of Anthroposophy new marvels of divine power and wisdom, whereby the miracle of divine love accomplished in the world of sense can only acquire

enhanced importance. As soon as in certain directions there is a fundamental insight into spiritual science such as was possessed by the above-mentioned noble priest and theologian, Laurenz Milliner, into modern natural science, all the attacks which are often made in such an unfounded manner upon spiritual science from the standpoint of religion will cease.